

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 3, 9 and 10 are amended.

Applicant appreciates the courtesy shown to Applicant's representative by Examiner Park and Primary Examiner Coles in the December 21, 2004 personal interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the invention is incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 3 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed in the interview, the amendments to claims 3 and 9 clarify that the produced image data is being stored inside the scanner device. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 3, 4, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Owa et. al. (hereinafter "Owa"), U.S. Patent No. 6,348,971. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 3 recites printing system comprising a scanner device, multiple printers, and a printing management device receiving printing instruction information and transmitting printing information corresponding to the printing instruction information to a corresponding printer among the multiple printers, the image input device comprising: printing instruction information setting means for setting printing instruction information including specification of a desired printer among the multiple printers; image data producing means for producing image data corresponding to the printing instruction information set by the printing instruction information setting means; storage management means for storing and managing the image data produced by the image data producing means; and transmitting means for transmitting the printing instruction information set by the printing instruction information setting means and information on a storing location of the image data produced by the image

data producing means to the printing management device, and the printing management device comprising: storage management means for storing and managing the printing instruction information and the information on the storing location of the image data transmitted from the transmission means in association with each other; and transmission control means for transmitting the image data corresponding to the desired printer based on the printing instruction information stored and managed by the storage management means to the desired printer from the storing location of the image data indicated in the information on the storing location. It is respectfully submitted that Owa fails to disclose these claimed features.

Claims 9 recites printing control method for a printing system including a scanner device, multiple printers, and a printing management device receiving printing instruction information and transmitting printing information corresponding to the printing instruction information to a corresponding printer among the multiple printers, the method comprising the steps of causing the scanner device to set printing instruction information including specification of a desired printer among the multiple printers, produce image data corresponding to the set printing instruction information, store and manage the produced data, and transmit the set printing instruction information and information on a storing location of the produced image data; and causing the printing management device to store and manage the printing instruction information and information on the storing location of the image data transmitted from the scanner device in association with each other, and transmit the image data corresponding to the desired printer based on the stored and managed printing instruction information to the desired printer from the storing location of the image data indicated in the information on the storing location. It is respectfully submitted that Owa fails to disclose these claimed features.

The Office Action alleges that Owa's host computer 1 in Fig. 2 correspond to what Applicant describes as a scanner device. However, as Owa describes in col. 3, lines 24-31 and as shown in Fig. 2, the host computer 1 comprises an output destination printer selection section 11, a basic information setting section 12, a status monitor section 13, a user print condition input section 14, a printer selection conditioning setting section 15, a document feature extraction section 16, a data transfer section 17 and a print data generation section 18. Nowhere does Owa describe an image input device that is used to produce image data. In fact, as Owa describes, at col. 12, lines 20-32, that the document features are analyzed for each page, at step S41, as to whether or not the document contains color data, whether or not the document contains image data, the use font type, etc., and the analyze result is retained. Accordingly, Owa's host computer is not an image input device, i.e., a scanner which can produce and store the image data.

Further, what the Office Action alleges as a storage management means for Owa does not correspond to what Applicant describes as a storage management means. As Owa describes in col. 17, lines 50-51, the server selects an optimum printer and informs the host computer of the selected optimum printer. However, nowhere does Owa describe that the server 3 stores and manages the information on the storing location of the image data transmitted from the transmission means in association with each other. Furthermore, nowhere does Owa describe a transmission control means that corresponds to Applicant's transmission control means.

Again, as described in Owa at col. 17, lines 44-51, there is no teaching that the server 3 receives the information on the storing location of the image data or that the server 3 transmits the information on the storage of the image data. The Office Action alleges that because server 3 can distinguish the host computer 1 among other host computers, server 3 must be initially notified with the information on the host computer, which the Office Action alleges is the storing location of the image data. However, the Office Action improperly implies that just

because the server 3 selects a host computer among other host computers, the server 3 stores the location of the image data. Nowhere, does Owa disclose that the server 3 stores and manages the information on the storing location of the image data transmitted from the transmission means in association with each other or that the server 3 performs a transmission control means for transmitting the image data corresponding to the desired printer based on the printing instruction information stored and managed by the storage management means to the desired printer from the storing location for the image data indicated in the information on the storing location.

Thus, Owa does literally disclose or suggest each and every feature of claims 3 and 9.

Because Owa does not anticipate or suggest the invention of claims 3 and 9, Owa cannot possibly anticipate or suggest the subject matter of claim 4, which depends from claim 3, and the subject matter of claim 10, which depends from claim 9, for the reasons discussed with respect to claims 3 and 9, as well as for the additional features recited therein. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 5-8, 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Owa in view of Bellucco et. al. (hereinafter "Bellucco"), U.S. Patent No. 5,930,465. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As agreed in the interview, Owa fails to disclose a printing management device which receives the image data and transmits the image data to a corresponding printer.

The Office Action alleges that Bellucco makes up for the deficiencies of Owa because Bellucco describes a printing management device which allegedly corresponds to the Applicant's printing management device. However, as discussed in the interview, Bellucco fails to disclose a printing management device which stores and manages the printing instruction information and the image data transmitted from the image input device in association with each

other, and transmits the image data corresponding to the desired printer based on the stored and manage printing instruction information.

As shown in Fig. 2 and as described in col. 4, lines 46-56, Bellucco combines the image data with the print data after the decision has been made by the print queues for selecting the appropriate printer. Moreover, as described in col. 4, lines 65-67 through col. 5, lines 1-2, the server control number 52 combines a set of documents 39 with a corresponding combination of print job selections to form a document job. Furthermore, as shown in Fig. 2, the print queues are mapped to the printers to select the appropriate printer for printing the document. It is not until the decision has been made by the print queues for selecting the appropriate printer that the image data stored in server control 52 is combined with the print data.

Thus, the combination of Owa and Bellucco does not literally disclose or suggest each and every feature of claims 1 and 7.

Because neither of the applied references nor the combination thereof disclose or suggest all the features recited in claims 1 and 7, they cannot possibly anticipate or suggest the subject matter of claims 2, 5 and 6, which depend from claim 1, and the subject matter of claims 8, 11 and 12, which depend from claim 7, for the reasons discussed with respect to claims 1 and 7, as well as for the additional features cited therein. It is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

Thus, as discussed at the interview, the pending claims are patentable over the applied references.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-12 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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